

emerged in warrior-aristocratic cultures, where power holders sought to limit succession to persons in their household whom they could dominate personally.

In economic anthropology, Meillassoux was influenced by Karl Polanyi and Paul Bohannan, but his sweeping vision linking political and economic phenomena and his ability to recognize broad patterns that eluded others, both partly inspired by his Marxian focus on social reproduction, led him quickly to leave behind their typological approach to produce strikingly original contributions.

Mahir Şaul

See also Althusser, Louis; Bohannan, Paul; Marxist Anthropology; Polanyi, Karl

Further Readings

- Meillassoux, C. (Ed.). (1971). *The development of Indigenous trade and markets in West Africa*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- . (1978). "The economy" in agricultural self-sustaining societies: A preliminary analysis. In D. Seddon (Ed.), *Relations of production* (pp. 127–157). London, UK: Frank Cass. (Original work published 1960)
- . (1981). *Maidens, meal and money: Capitalism and the domestic community*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1975)
- . (1991). *The anthropology of slavery: The womb of iron and gold*. London, UK: Athlone. (Original work published 1986)
- Saul, M. (2005). Claude Meillassoux. *American Anthropologist*, 107(4), 753–757.

SOCIAL EVOLUTIONARY THEORY, 20-CENTURY

See Carneiro, Robert L.; Comparative Method; Fried, Morton; Murdock, George Peter; Sahlins, Marshall; Service, Elman R.; Steward, Julian; White, Leslie

MINTZ, SIDNEY

Sidney W. Mintz (1922–) is an American anthropologist known for his pioneering ethnographic and

historical research on the Caribbean, Afro-American cultures, cultural creolization, and food systems. Mintz is the author and editor of several books and many scientific articles on these and related themes. Caribbeanist anthropologists typically study only one society or societies speaking the same language in the region. Mintz chose to do fieldwork in three Caribbean societies with three different colonial legacies and languages: Puerto Rico (1948–1949, 1953, 1956), Jamaica (1952, 1954), and Haiti (1958–1959, 1961). He later worked in Iran (1966–1967), where he did fieldwork with his wife, Jacqueline Wei Mintz, and in Hong Kong (1996, 1999).

Biography and Theoretical Directions

Mintz was born in Dover, New Jersey, one of four children of Eastern European Jewish immigrant parents. Arriving in New York at the beginning of the 20th century, his father, Solomon, was a diemaker and clothing salesman; his mother, Fanny, became a seamstress and Industrial Workers of the World organizer. With the onset of the Depression, Solomon lost the restaurant he had eventually come to own there, opened a diner, and became a cook. Mintz attended Brooklyn College, and in the summer months, he worked the midnight shift at an arsenal near Dover. After receiving his BA in psychology in 1943, he was drafted into the U.S. Army Air Corps, where he taught celestial navigation. After the war and with the aid of the G.I. Bill, he enrolled in graduate studies in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University in September 1946. During 1947–1948, he was an assistant to Ruth Benedict, whom he admired. At Columbia, he encountered fellow veteran graduate students who were interested in leftist/radical politics and in applying Marxist/materialist approaches to anthropological theory. They formed a study group called the Mundial Upheaval Society, many of whose members, including Mintz, Stanley Diamond, Morton Fried, Robert Manners, John Murra, Elman Service, and Eric Wolf, became prominent professionally.

At Columbia, a major influence was Julian Steward, whose models of multilineal evolution provided a critique of the ethnographic particularism of many followers of Franz Boas and a counterpart to Benedict's culture and personality approach. With funding from the Rockefeller Foundation and the University of Puerto Rico, Steward assembled a team

of graduate students from Columbia and from the University of Chicago, whose members would each study an economically and ecologically distinct sector in the island. Mintz chose to study a rural sugar plantation proletariat at "Cañamelar," a pseudonym for Jauca, Santa Isabel, on the island's south coast. Murra, who was on the faculty of the University of Puerto Rico, was the project's field manager. In the resulting landmark book, *The People of Puerto Rico: A Study in Social Anthropology* (1956), each student contributed a chapter based on his or her field studies. It was during his fieldwork that Mintz developed a lifelong friendship with his main informant, Anastacio Zayas Alvarado ("Taso"), who became the subject of Mintz's book *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History* (1960).

Mintz's early anthropological training contributed greatly to the formation of his theoretical perspective. Mintz agreed with his friend and early collaborator Wolf that past cultural forms and social structures orient and limit human behavior; but within these forms, and from the norms acquired as part of the culture-learning process, humans learn how to maneuver socially toward achieving their particular goals. Their room for maneuver, however, depends substantially on their position within specific social and economic systems. Mintz sought to create a theory of culture that might enrich Marxism. For Mintz, "culture," while definable as behavior mediated through symbols, must also be seen as a set of historically derived materials animated by events and actors in a social system. Placing an emphasis on how people made their living and how that experience is objectified and symbolized, Mintz argues that cultural forms and social positions overlap. Different classes and social groupings do not necessarily have different cultures; yet the existence of some single, coherent culture for each society cannot be demonstrated. From early on, Mintz developed his characteristic refusal to consider the "communities" studied by anthropologists as cut off from wider networks and historical connections of world power and influence. Here, he anticipated the anthropological interest in globalization by decades.

Other early influences on the formation of Mintz's anthropological thought include his encounters with the work of Caribbean intellectuals. While doing fieldwork in Puerto Rico, he met the Trinidadian historian (later politician) Eric Williams and read

his now classic book *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), in which Williams argued that the motivations for slavery were economic and that Atlantic slavery was implicated in the development of capitalism. Mintz was also influenced by the Trotskyite Trinidadian scholar-writer C. L. R. James's book *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938), which he read when preparing to do research in Haiti. In his book, James argued for the utter modernity of Caribbean people, born as they were in the crucible of slavery and industrial factory production that characterized the sugar plantations. Mintz also interacted with Caribbean ethnologists such as Fernando Ortiz of Cuba and Jean Price-Mars of Haiti. Other Caribbean intellectual influences can be traced to the Haitian anthropologist Rémy Bastien, the Jamaican anthropologist Jean Besson, the Jamaican historian Douglas Hall, and the Guyanese historian Elsa Goveia, among others.

Mintz conducted fieldwork in Jamaica's former "Free Villages," whose origins could be traced to church-founded landholding schemes to establish a free peasantry after slave emancipation during the 1830s and 1840s. This led to his interest in the Caribbean peasantry. Early research on peasant markets and on market women in Jamaica led to a Guggenheim Fellowship to conduct research on Haitian markets. Mintz published papers on units of measure, on trading partners, on the uses of capital, and on the specifics of provisioning and financial transactions. He would later reflect on his fieldwork and his relationships with his informants in Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Haiti in his book *Three Ancient Colonies: Caribbean Themes and Variations*, published in 2010.

Mintz enjoyed a long academic career at Yale University (1951–1974), where he helped found the Afro-American Studies program. He produced PhD students who did their dissertations on the Caribbean, including the African American scholar Council S. Taylor. In 1974, he was invited to found the Department of Anthropology at the Johns Hopkins University, where he helped start the interdisciplinary Program in Atlantic History and Culture. There, he produced a number of PhD graduates, including many from the Caribbean, who were all encouraged to study a Caribbean society different from their own. He was the editor of a book series on the Caribbean for the Yale University Press, and

then, after his move to Johns Hopkins University, he became a coeditor of the Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture book series. He was a visiting professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the École Pratique des Hautes Études and the Collège de France (Paris), Florida International University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and elsewhere. In 1992, Johns Hopkins established the annual Sidney W. Mintz Lecture, which quickly became a prestigious venue. In 2012, the American Anthropological Association awarded Mintz the Franz Boas Award for Exemplary Service to Anthropology.

Critical Contributions to Anthropology

Mintz's critical contributions are many; in the context of a career spanning 5 decades, they are difficult to adumbrate. They fall roughly into three broad categories: (1) a historical approach to the formation of Caribbean societies, their role in the emergence of the capitalist world system, and how local responses would affect the cultural outcomes; (2) what is meant by the creolization of African culture in the New World; and (3) the historical anthropology of food, food systems, and foodways.

Capitalism, Contradictions, and the Caribbean

Mintz often pointed out that the Caribbean was the site of Europe's first sustained transoceanic colonial expansion and that this intercultural encounter was conducted on terms new to both the dominators and the dominated. In *Caribbean Transformations* (1974), Mintz theorized that colonial and post-colonial Caribbean "plantation societies" were deeply affected by the plantation complex, because it was itself tied to wider, world-spanning political economies and its populations of slaves and masters began as migrants themselves. Mintz's materialistic approach led him to suspect popular-nationalist and scholarly arguments that differing colonial slavery systems produced qualitatively differing degrees of cruelty, exploitation, and racism. The intensity of capitalistic effort did affect how these societies and cultures took shape. Mintz further argued that conventional theoretical categories had to be rethought when it came to the Caribbean. For example, in debating whether the Caribbean slave could be considered a proletarian, Mintz pointed

out that Caribbean slavery was different from most Old World slavery because of its involvement with capitalism. But because slavery meant unfree labor, the Caribbean region was, while in the service of capitalism, not fully capitalistic. Contradictory forces, he argued, produced Caribbean peoples who were highly individualized through their plantation-based relationship with modernity yet able to engage in collective and cooperative activity. Caribbean peasantries were unlike the peasantries that existed elsewhere. They were formed, he contended, in resistance and as an adaptation to slavery and the plantation complex, as a "mode of response" to the plantation system and a "mode of resistance" to superior power. Mintz called them "reconstituted" because they began in recent historical time as something other than peasants. Not content with typological overviews, Mintz focused his ethnographic lens on the domestic economy and the gendered division of labor, especially women's roles in marketing.

Creolization in Question

In collaboration with the anthropologist Richard Price, Mintz's one-time informal student and then colleague at Yale and at Johns Hopkins, Mintz addressed the question of African cultural origins and cultural creativity in the New World. In the book *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Approach* (1992; first published in 1976 and first delivered as a conference paper in 1973), Mintz and Price considered the question of *creolization* (a term used to describe the blending of two or more cultural traditions to create a new one) in Afro-American culture. Though they do not employ the word *creolization* at all in the book, they significantly revise and qualify the U.S. anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits's approach to Afro-American culture, which Herskovits saw as consisting of African cultural survivals existing below the surface of colonial-derived culture but still identifiable in key practices such as language and religion. Mintz and Price looked instead at cultural creativity and mutual fashioning in hierarchical, power-laden colonial and postcolonial contexts. Combining Herskovits's cultural-anthropological approach and the structuralism of the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (Price had studied with Lévi-Strauss for a year in Paris), Mintz and Price argued that Afro-American culture is characterized

by the deep-level “grammatical principles” of the various African cultures that entered into the slave trade and that these principles today extend to motor behaviors, kinship practices, gender relations, and religious cosmologies. This has been an influential yet controversial model in the anthropology of the African diaspora.

Sweetness, Power, and Gastronomical Orbits

Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History (1985) established Mintz’s prominence as an anthropologist of food. Drawing on history, anthropology, botany, geography, economics, and nutrition, *Sweetness and Power* employs multidisciplinary theory and methodology to explore sugar’s meanings and uses over time. The book is also notable for incorporating issues of both production and consumption and for connecting the New World brutalities of slavery in the Caribbean to the Old World brutalities of English industrialization. While those who produced sugar endured cruelty, slavery, and early death, the product of that labor was consumed in weak tea and in bread and jam in Britain by the world’s first factory proletarians. Among the first serious academic studies to feature an edible commodity, *Sweetness and Power* became a model of interdisciplinary food studies scholarship.

In *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions Into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (1996), Mintz evinced skepticism about the existence of “national” (especially “American”) cuisines, and argued instead that cuisines are products of regional geographical locations and indigenous foods. Later, Mintz traced the development and use of the “proletarian hunger killers” tea and Coca-Cola, which emerged as popular drinks in modernizing societies (England of the 1800s, the southern United States of the 1900s) as workers’ mealtimes became shaped by factory schedules. Finally, Mintz examined the use of soy in the West, primarily as an industrial crop rather than as a human food, in contrast to soy’s multiple forms in Asian foodways.

Mintz’s Legacy

Mintz combined a Marxist/historical materialist perspective with the particularism of Boasian cultural anthropology. His focus remained steadily on those global socioeconomic forces that marked the

advent of capitalism and European expansion in the Caribbean. But at the same time Mintz argued that the local cultural responses to such forces should be investigated through careful, empathetic, and ethical ethnography; Mintz’s theoretical approach anticipated the interest in globalization and cultural hybridity that characterized early-21-century anthropology. Yet Mintz insisted, against the grain, that these concepts used only in the abstract were of no help to serious anthropological and historical understanding. Methodologically, Mintz’s historical approach led the way for anthropologists to visit the archives. And *multisited ethnography* was part of his anthropology well before the term was coined. Mintz was also reflexive on academic politics. He regretted that the study of the Caribbean was placed outside anthropology’s prestige zones because its culturally and ethnically hybrid populations were not “exotic” enough for a discipline that sometimes traded in exoticism. His own immense contribution to anthropological theory based on Caribbean research belied those mistaken and prejudiced notions. Mintz’s leading role in the production, reproduction, and institutionalization of anthropological knowledge means that his legacy will endure.

Kevin A. Yelvington and Amy Bentley

See also Benedict, Ruth F.; Columbia University; Fried, Morton; Herskovits, Melville; Service, Elman R.; Steward, Julian; Wolf, Eric

Further Readings

- Baca, G., Khan, A., & Palmié, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Empirical futures: Anthropologists and historians engage the work of Sidney W. Mintz*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Bentley, A. (Ed.). (2008). Sweetness and power: Rethinking Sidney Mintz’s classic work. [Special issue, guest edited]. *Food and Foodways*, 16(2).
- Carnegie, C. V. (2006). The anthropology of ourselves: An interview with Sidney W. Mintz. *Small Axe*, 19, 106–179.
- Duncan, R. J. (Ed.). (1979). *The anthropology of The People of Puerto Rico*. San Germán, Puerto Rico: Inter American University of Puerto Rico, Caribbean Institute and Study Center for Latin America.
- Ghani, A. (1998). Routes to the Caribbean: An interview with Sidney W. Mintz. *Plantation Society in the Americas*, 5(1), 103–134.

- Lauria-Perriceli, A. (1989). A study in historical and critical anthropology: The making of *The People of Puerto Rico* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). New School for Social Research, New York.
- Palmié, S. (2005). Ackee and saltfish vs. *amalá con quimbombó*: A note on Sidney Mintz' contribution to the historical anthropology of African American cultures. *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, 91(2), 89–122.
- Peace, W. (2008). Columbia University and the Mundial Upheaval Society: A study in academic networking. In D. M. Wax (Ed.), *Anthropology at the dawn of the Cold War: The influence of foundations, McCarthyism, and the CIA* (pp. 143–165). London, UK: Pluto Press.
- Scott, D. (2004). Modernity that predated the modern: Sidney Mintz's Caribbean. *History Workshop Journal*, 58, 191–210.
- Silverman, S. (Ed.). (2011). The Puerto Rico project: Reflections sixty years later. [Special issue, guest edited]. *Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 18(3).

MOBILITY

Mobility—a complex assemblage of movement, representation, and practice—appears self-evidently central to globalization, as a key process and as a fundamental metaphor capturing the common impression that our lifeworld is in constant flux. The current anthropological interest in human mobility, from daily home-to-work movements to more permanent transnational migration, goes hand in hand with theoretical approaches that question earlier taken-for-granted correspondences between peoples, places, and cultures. This follows the critique by James Clifford in the 1990s that anthropology needs to leave behind its preoccupation with discovering the “roots” of sociocultural forms and instead trace the “routes” that (re)produce them. Over the years, anthropologists have studied the most diverse forms of mobility across the globe. This entry examines key issues related to the concept of mobility that have repercussions for the discipline as a whole.

Although anthropologists have been slow to react to the alleged “mobility turn” in the social sciences (as propagated by geographers and sociologists), ideas of mobility have a long history in anthropology. They are already present in transcultural diffusionism (Franz Boas) and in French theories of gift exchange systems (Marcel Mauss). Archaeological

and (ethno)historical records show that humankind has always been characterized by movement and that certain groups were more mobile in the past than they are now. For a long time, however, mainstream anthropology mostly confined its analyses of boundary-crossing movements to the areas of kinship (marriage mobility), politics (structure of nomadic peoples), and religion (pilgrimage). Moreover, mobility was often limited as a defining characteristic of groups such as hunter-gatherers or traveler gypsies. It was used as a concept describing physical or abstract motion, not as something implying in and of itself social or cultural change.

While classical anthropology tended to ignore or regard boundary-crossing movements as deviations from normative place-bound communities, cultural homogeneity, and social integration, discourses of globalization and cosmopolitanism (which have become dominant since the end of the Cold War) shifted the pendulum in the opposite direction. In the 1990s, globalization—largely theorized in terms of transborder “flows”—was often being promoted as normality, and too much place attachment was seen as a local resistance against globalizing forces. Mobility became a predominant characteristic of anthropological analyses of the globalized world. This led to “multi-sited ethnography” (George Marcus), to capture the transnational flows that “deterritorialize identity” (Arjun Appadurai) and lead to “creolization” (Ulf Hannerz). By the turn of the millennium, however, there were already serious cracks in the discourse of unfettered mobility that accompanied the master narrative of the benefits and necessity of (economic) globalization. The overly optimistic language of mobility had inadvertently distracted attention from how the fluidity of markets shapes flexibility in modes of control (see the work of Anna Tsing and Aihwa Ong).

The movement of people may, and often does, create or reinforce difference and inequality, as well as blending or erasing such differences (Nina Glick Schiller). Despite the overly general celebration and romanticization, the ability to move (and the freedom not to move) is spread unevenly within countries and across the planet. Border-crossing journeys as a form of human experience are the exception rather than the norm. Anthropologists were among the first to point out that the very processes that produce cross-border movements and global linkages also promote immobility, exclusion, and